

Claims 1, 4-8, 10, 13-17 and 20-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Alcott (U.S. Patent No. 6,324,273). Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn because Alcott neither discloses or suggests "in accordance with the first party having previously inquired about the first telecommunication feature when unavailable," notifying the first party that the first telecommunication feature has become available to the first party, as recited in amended claims 1, 10 and 17.

Alcott discloses method, system and articles for ordering a telecommunication service. The ordering system allows a user to enter a service code of a name of a telecommunication service in which the user is interested. Users may directly order, provision, and establish subscription telecommunication service products using touchtone keys. The system of Alcott does not disclose or suggest, however, notifying the customer that the first telecommunication feature becomes available to the customer, when the customer had previously inquired about the first telecommunication feature when unavailable. Alcott discloses presenting all new services to all customers, indiscriminately.

Conversely, independent claims 1, 10 and 17 of the present invention recite "in accordance with the customer having previously inquired about the first telecommunication feature when unavailable," notifying the first party that the first telecommunication feature has become available to the first party. This way, the user is automatically informed that a service in which the user was previously interested, which was unavailable at the time, has subsequently become available. Alcott does not disclose or suggest such a system.

For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection to claims 1, 10 and 17 be withdrawn. In addition, claims 5-8 depend from claim 1, claims 14-16 depend from claim 10, and claims 21-23 depend from claim 17. Since these dependent claims include all of the feature of the

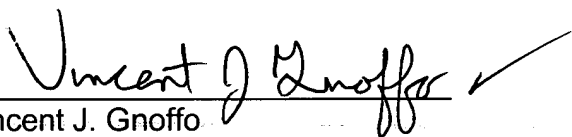
respective independent claims, plus additional feature, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection to these claims also be withdrawn.

Claims 2-3, 9, 11-12 and 18-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Alcott. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Regarding independent claims 1, 9, 10 and 17, and as discussed in more detail above, Alcott does not disclose or suggest "in accordance with the first party having previously inquired about the first telecommunication feature when unavailable," notifying the first party that the telecommunication feature has become available to the first party. For at least those reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to claim 9 be withdrawn. Claims 2-3 depend from claim 1, claims 11-12 depend from claim 10 and claims 18-19 depend from claim 17. Therefore, for at least the reasons discussed with regard to the independent claims, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection to claims 2-3, 11-12 and 18-19 be withdrawn.

For at least all of the above reasons, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (312) 321-4224 if there are any outstanding issues that could be resolved through a telephone conference.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Appendix A  
VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims

Please amend claims 1, 9, 10 and 17 as follows:

1. (Amended)        A method comprising:

storing a first data structure which identifies a first party of a telecommunication network and a first telecommunication feature unavailable to the first party;

after storing the first data structure, inputting availability data which indicates an availability of the first telecommunication feature to a portion of the telecommunication network which serves the first party; [and]

processing the first data structure and the availability data to determine that the first telecommunication feature has become available to the first party; and

in accordance with the first party having previously inquired about the first telecommunication feature when unavailable, notifying the first party that the first telecommunication feature has become available to the first party.

2. (Amended)        A method comprising:

receiving a first call from a first party of a telecommunication network;

determining that a first telecommunication feature is unavailable to the first party;

informing, in the first call, that the first telecommunication feature is unavailable to the first party;

storing a first data structure which identifies the first party and the first telecommunication feature unavailable to the first party;

receiving a second call from a second party;

determining that a second telecommunication feature is unavailable to the second party;

informing, in the second call, that the second telecommunication feature is unavailable to the second party;

storing a second data structure which identifies the second party and the second telecommunication feature unavailable to the second party;

receiving a third call from a third party;

determining that the first telecommunication feature is unavailable to the third party;

informing, in the third call, that the first telecommunication feature is unavailable to the third party;

storing a third data structure which identifies the third party and the first telecommunication feature unavailable to the third party;

after storing the first data structure, the second data structure, and the third data structure, inputting availability data which indicates an availability of the first telecommunication feature to a portion of the telecommunication network which serves the first party but not the third party;

processing the first data structure, the second data structure, the third data structure, and the availability data to determine that the first telecommunication feature has become available to the first party but remains unavailable to the third party; and

in accordance with the first party having previously inquired about the first telecommunication feature when unavailable, notifying the first party in a fourth call that the first telecommunication feature has become available to the first party.

10. (Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a database comprising a first data structure which identifies a first party of a telecommunication network and a first telecommunication feature unavailable to the first party; [and]

a computer to receive availability data which indicates an availability of the first telecommunication feature to a portion of the telecommunication network which serves the first party, the computer to process the first data structure and the availability data to determine that the first telecommunication feature has become available to the first party, and

wherein, in accordance with the first party having previously inquired about the first telecommunication feature when unavailable, the computer outputs a signal to initiate notifying the first party that the first telecommunication feature has become available to the first party.

17. (Amended) A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a computer to store a first data structure which identifies a first party of a telecommunication network and a first telecommunication feature unavailable to the first party, to receive availability data which indicates an availability of the first telecommunication feature to a portion of the telecommunication network which serves the first party, and to process the first data structure and the availability data to determine that the first telecommunication feature has become available to the first party, wherein, in accordance with the first party having previously inquired about the first telecommunication feature when unavailable, the contents further cause the computer outputs a signal to initiate notifying the first party that the first telecommunication feature has become available to the first party.